

"Fresco-secco is extensively used in Italy at present, and with great success: the chiaro-scuro decorations executed in this manner are excellent; but I found that at Milan, where I had an opportunity of examining some specimens, it did not bear washing like the *Manich* process. The method seemed the same, but the result differed in this respect, and I had no opportunity of seeing the actual process of paintings executed in this mode, in any other part of Italy.

"At Genoa, where the paintings in the churches and palaces have no claim to be called *fresco*, although generally so described, a compound process has been followed in their execution. They were all commenced, or partly commenced, in *fresco*, but were finished in distemper, and size has been used for mixing the colours, and they can easily be removed by washing. The object of the Genoese artists has been to supply the fancied deficiencies of *fresco*-painting in point of colour; but, although they have succeeded in making use of vermilion, brilliant green, and bright yellow, they have not produced satisfactory works of art. The paintings are curish and out of harmony; the colours subsequently added in distemper do not harmonize with those previously used in *fresco*, and the general effect is totally devoid of that transparency which is distinctive of good *fresco*-painting. The Genoese have brought *fresco* down to the level of mere size-painting; and the works which they have left are proofs of the danger of carrying the practice of retouching too far.

"In the Doria Palace instances occur in which it may be observed that the entire picture was not prepared in *fresco* and then retouched in distemper, but that portions were painted in *fresco*, and then, that plaster being allowed to dry, the remaining portions, not previously touched when wet, were begun and finished in distemper. Pierino del Vaga, or perhaps Pordenone, who painted in the same palace, may have introduced this practice as well as others equally objectionable.

"CHARLES H. WILSON."

PUBLIC MONUMENTS.—The question which Mr. Hewes lately propounded to Sir Robert Peel respecting the public recognition of the labours of eminent civilians, appears, from the subjoined letter, addressed by the Premier to Mr. Eastlake, as Secretary of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts, to be likely to lead to some practical results:—

"Whitehall, August 17, 1843.

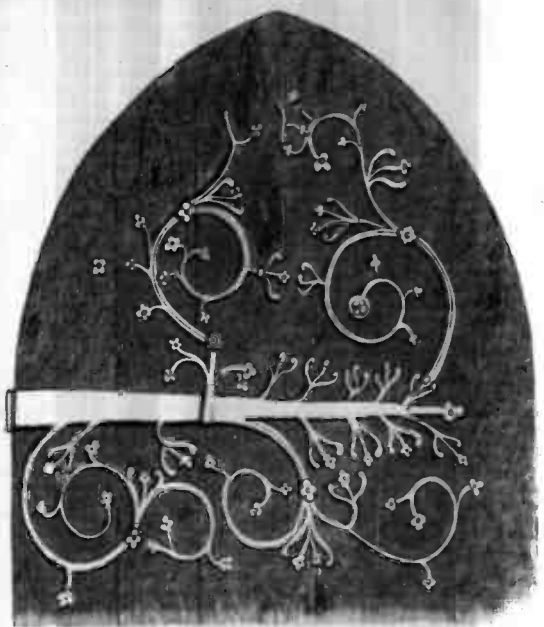
DEAR SIR,—A proposal was recently made in the House of Commons, that the Commissioners should be empowered by her Majesty to inquire into the best means of doing honour, by public monuments in sculpture or painting, to be erected at the public charge, to the memory of men entitled to the gratitude of their country by eminent civil, literary, or scientific services. I was unwilling to devolve on the Commissioners a general inquiry of this nature, not immediately connected with the original object for which the Commission was appointed, but I willingly undertook to recommend to her Majesty to give to the Commissioners full authority to consider whether there is a portion of the relief intended for the accommodation of the Houses of Parliament or of the buildings connected with that edifice, which could with advantage and propriety be allotted to the reception of monuments, such as those to which I have before adverted, and to report their opinion to her Majesty, not only with regard to the particular site of such monuments, but in the event of an appropriate site in connection with the new Houses of Parliament being recommended by the Commissioners, with regard to the principles, generally, which should govern the selection of the names to be honoured by so distinguished a record of national gratitude, and to the best mode of combining the public acknowledgment of eminent service with encouragement to the arts in this country. I am empowered by her Majesty to recommend the subject to the consideration of the Commissioners, and to give them her Majesty's full authority for entering upon it.

I am, &c.

(Signed) ROBERT PEEL.

C. L. EASTLAKE, Esq.

THE FRESCO AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE GARDENS.—Of the fresco embellishments, concerning which we offered some remarks last month, there remain two not yet finished, or, we believe, commenced—those undertaken by Mr. Eastlake and Mr. E. Landseer. It will be readily conceived that the occupation incident to his office as Secretary to the Royal Commission has hitherto prevented Mr. Eastlake from performing his portion of the task. We trust, however, now that the "second report" has been delivered, and all preliminary arrangements have been made, a relaxation from labour will restore Mr. Eastlake to his profession—from which he can ill be spared, even for the great purpose of lavishing the functions of "Fine Arts" upon the gardens of Buckingham Palace.



HINGE TO CRYPT DOORWAY, WELLS CATHEDRAL.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—In pursuance of our promise to send original sketches illustrative of interesting subjects, I beg to forward a drawing by one of our members, Mr. Edwin C. Sayer, and whose description of it is subjoined. It was made on the spot a few months back.—I remain, Sir, very obediently yours.

JAMES WYLLSON, Hon. Sec.
B. A. A. D.

ON PLANE METALLIC SURFACES AND THE PROPER MODE OF PREPARING THEM.

THE extensive class of machinery, denominated tools, affords an important application of the subject. Here every consideration combines to enforce accuracy: it is implied in the very name of the planning-engine, the express purpose of which is to produce true surfaces, and it is itself constructed of slides, according to the truth of which will be that of the work performed. Moreover, when it is considered that the lathes and the planning-engine are used in the making of all other machines, and are continually reproducing surfaces similar to their own, it will manifestly appear of the first importance, that they should themselves be perfect models.

There is, it may be affirmed, no description of machinery which does not afford an illustration of the importance belonging to truth of surface, and, at the same time, of the present necessity for material improvement; nor is there any subject connected with mechanics, the bearings of which on the public interests, whether manufacturing or scientific, are more varied or more extensive.

The improvement so much to be desired, will speedily follow upon the discontinuance of grinding; recourse must then be had to the natural process. The surface-plate and the scraping-tool will come into general and constant use, affording the certain and speedy means of attaining any degree of truth which may be required. A higher standard of excellence will be gradually established, the influence of which will diffuse itself throughout all mechanical operations, while, to the mechanic himself, a new field will be opened, offering ample scope for the exercise of skill, both manual and mental. The subject will be best elucidated by a description of the process.

There are two cases for consideration in reference to the preparation of surfaces—the one where a true surface-plate is already provided, as a model and set of the work in hand, and the other, where an original surface is to be prepared. The former is the case which more frequently occurs in practice; and the latter, though less frequent, is of great importance, and requires to be carefully observed.

The above drawing represents the upper hinge on the door opening into the Crypt of Wells Cathedral; it is of the thirteenth century, and offering a variation in the iron-work of that time, must be considered interesting. There are three hinges on the door, which is not shown in Britain; but a general notion is given of it in Carter.

See also page 375.

requiring care rather than skill. Colouring matter, such as red ochre and oil, is spread over the surface-plate as equally as possible. The work in hand having been previously filed up to the straight edge, is then applied thereto, and moved slightly to fix the colour, which, adhering to the parts in contact, afterwards shows the prominences to be reduced. This operation is frequently repeated, and, as the work advances, a smaller quantity of colouring matter is used, till at last a few particles, spread out by the finger, suffice for the purpose, forming a thin film over the brightness of the plate. A true surface is thus rendered a test of the greatest nicety, whereby the smallest error may be detected. At this stage of the process, the two surfaces must be well rubbed together, that a full impression may be made by the colour; the higher points on the rising surface become clouded over, while the other parts are left more or less in shade. The dappled appearance thus produced, shows to the eye of the mechanic the precise condition of the new surface in every part, and enables him to proceed with confidence in bringing it to correspond with the original. Before this can be accomplished, however, a scraping tool must be employed, the file not having, even in the most skillful hands, the nicety and precision requisite to complete the operation. In this, as in almost every other mechanical operation, experience is the best and most certain guide to indicate when to exchange the one for the other. It will be found that when the parts to be operated upon have become to any considerable extent subdivided, scraping is much the more expeditious method. The scraping-tool should be made of the best cast steel, and carefully sharpened to a fine edge on a Turkey-stone, the use of which must be frequently repeated. Worn-out files, of the best quality, may be converted into convenient scraping tools. A flat file, with the broad end bent and sharpened, will be most suitable to commence with, and afterwards a three-sided or triangular file, sharpened on all the edges. It must be a matter of discretion, as before remarked, how far to proceed in working up the minute detail; but, as a general rule, it is absolutely essential that the bearing points, whether more or less numerous, should be equally distributed, and an uniformity of character preserved throughout the surface; and the following observations should be carefully observed.